

Huw Merriman MP
Minister of State
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

By email to:

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Contact: Bridget Smith
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1 February 2023

Dear Minister

Subsequent to the announcement on Nov 17th that Government intends to proceed with the development of an east west rail link between Cambridge and Oxford I, and the Parish Councils who have co-signed this letter, would like to invite you to visit South Cambridgeshire, ideally with EWR Ltd in attendance too. This is the district which will have to accommodate the majority of the new infrastructure with significant impact on many of our villages and I would welcome the opportunity to show you what this means to local communities.

The uncertainty over the past 5 years about the status of this scheme has caused considerable distress to residents and communities and this has not been allayed by the engagement carried out thus far by EWR Ltd.

Whilst we as an administration are supportive of the principle of an East West rail link, we have considerable reservations about the schemes that have been presented so far, both because of the impact on small and sensitive communities as well as on the environmental damage to an already denuded natural landscape.

Additionally, there has been pitiful engagement with us as the planning authority over the location of a new station at Cambourne and while we accept the advantages of this for the

community, I was extremely concerned to learn that no thought at all had been given to the knock on requirement for additional housing at Cambourne and where it could be located.

Local residents do not feel heard and there is much unhappiness regarding what is widely seen as a 'done deal'. I am appealing for far greater transparency over decision making. Proposals involving 30ft high embankments have done enormous damage to public confidence and the silence around why a diesel rolling stock is being proposed adds to this. Additionally communities that could be impacted by the infrastructure feel that they are taking all the pain without any gain in terms of access to a rail service.

I believe that it is absolutely essential that this is a railway line fit for the 21st century and that it meets, if not exceeds, the environmental standards that we as the local authority are striving for.

I would be delighted to host you for a meeting at our offices in Cambourne and to take you on a tour of the villages which could be most impacted.

Yours sincerely

Bridget Smith
Leader, South Cambridgeshire District Council

Co-signatory Parish Councils:

Abington Pigotts (parish meeting)	Elsworth	Knapwell (parish meeting)
Barrington	Fen Drayton	Little Gransden
Barton	Fowlmere	Madingley
Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth	Foxton	Melbourn
Cambourne	Gamlingay	Pampisford
Cottenham	Great Shelford	Papworth Everard
Croydon	Harlton	Stapleford
Dry Drayton	Hatley	Teversham
Duxford	Hauxton	Whittlesford
	Ickleton	
	Kingston	